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## Page-tearing Sydney Biennale work spawns circular controversy

Arts Hub Australia  
Thursday, June 03, 2004

Tzay Chuen's unusual contribution to the Sydney Biennale has prompted an equally unusual response from a group of Sydney artists.

Chuen is giving away his allocated gallery space to any artist willing to compete for it. The competition Chuen is running to determine the winner is the artist's own artistic contribution in the event.

Competitors are required to collect as many copies as possible of the first page of the Biennale catalogue, containing curator Isabel Carlos' Biennale essay. The person that collects the most copies wins the right to use the Chuen exhibition space throughout the Biennale, \$4000 cash, and, in true gameshow style, four nights accommodation in a leading Sydney hotel.

The unique concept provides a tantalising opportunity for an unknown artist to make a splash, but has raised criticism that an artist should not be able to 'win' a coveted spot in to a respected biennale without any form of peer review or curation.

Tzay Chuen is tight-lipped on his intent in devising the competition, but it is widely speculated that the exercise, which forces willing entrants to violate the expensive catalogue, examines elitism and career ambition in the art world.

A collective of Sydney artists, calling themselves 'Sydney Circular', has formed solely to generate debate about Chuen's creative 'competition' - upping the ante with an idea equally provocative.

Sydney Circular will attempt to win the prize and is urging the arts community to donate catalogue pages to their bid. Understanding that buyers might not want to part with the page, Sydney Circular have obtained exclusive rights from Carlos to recirculate her essay in the form of a limited edition print. The group will give this print back to all those who donate the actual page.

Here's the twist.

Should Sydney Circular win they will not promote an individual artist's work. Instead they will set up a new competition, open only to Tzay Chuen. He may win back the right to exhibit at the Biennale by publishing a glowing review of the group's Sydney Circular's response project.

If Circular wins and Tzay Chuen does not respond to their offer, they intend to leave the gallery space empty and donate the prize money to Windmill Trust - a fund for artists who, through misfortune, are in need of assistance to refocus energies on their

careers.

The catalogue in question will be available on the 5th of June at the Art Gallery of NSW and the Museum of Contemporary Art.

For further information on the Biennale, [CLICK HERE](#).

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